Vol. VI. Numb. 31

THE OBSERVATOR.

The Country-man *in Deſpair. The* Obſervator *comforts him. The* Obſervator's *Sermon. Of the News from* Spain. *Of the Duke* D'Anjou's *March for* Catalonia. *Of the intended March of the King of* Sweden *for* Bohemia.

From Saturday, June 14. to Wednesday, June 18. 1707.

Obſ. WELL, how is't now, *Roger?*

Country-m. Worſe and worſe, Maſter; my Heart is almoſt broke; I ſhall never recover it. Nothing but bad News from *Abroad*, and hit in the Teeth with the Loſs of our *Conſtitution* at Home: I will die, Maſter; I had rather be in a Pit-hole ten Foot under Ground, than in theſe diſmal Circumſtances.

Obſ. We muſt both die together then; and this we can't do neither. The Almighty and Wiſe Governor of the Univerſe, in whoſe Hands our Lives are, keeps it in his own Power, that we ſhall live no longer, nor die no ſooner than he pleaſes; our Days are determin'd; our Bounds are ſet; ſo far we muſt go, and no farther.

Country-m. Let me remind you of your own Maxim; this Vexation and Trouble beats my *Latin* out of my Head; but I think 'tis *Nunquam de Republica Deſperandum eſt.* How often have you told me, I muſt never deſpair of the publick Safety? What think you now, Sir?

Obſ. Deſpair is from the Devil. When a Sinner begins to be ſenſible of his Sin, and is willing to turn from it unto God, the crooked Serpent tempts him to deſpair of the Mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, the worſt Sin that can be; and thereby ſets him at a greater Diſtance from his Salvation.

We muſt never deſpair, ſtill believing that it is in the Power of the wiſe Governor of the Univerſe to retrieve the Fate of *Europe*, and that he permits theſe Things for wiſe Ends and Purpoſes, beſt known to himſelf, and imperceptible by human Underſtandings: And we may reſt our ſelves contented, that all Things are rightly order'd and diſpos'd by him, who does, and will govern the World.

It was the Saying of a better States-man than any now living in *England*, *In the Time of Proſperity, rejoyce; in the Time of Adverſity, conſider.* *Roger*, you and I, for above five Years, have endeavour'd to ſet the common People in a true View of their own Intereſt; we have ſhow'd 'em the Things that belong to their Peace, and foretold, from the Management of the Miniſters and great Officers, the diſmal Events that now are in View: What our Treatment from 'em has been, the whole Kingdom knows, and yet we muſt proceed: We have preach'd 'em many an honeſt Sermon already, and we'll preach 'em another on the Text before us, which I think will include our preſent Circumſtances.

Country-m. Aye, pray, Maſter, do: If we caſt Pearls before Swine, 'tis not the firſt Time.

Obſ. In Proſperity, rejoyce. It is the Duty of all good Chriſtians to rejoyce when the Mercies of God flow in upon 'em, and this is the only Way to continue them: When we abuſe the Mercies of Heaven, and grow wanton under its Favours; when we attribute to Man the Praiſe that is due alone to God Almighty, we puſh his Mercies from us, and in Effect tell him, we can ſtand on our own Legs, and ſubſiſt by the Power of an Arm of Fleſh.

We have had ſignal Mercies, ſpecial and particular Favours, but how have we rejoyc'd? Have our Days of Thankſgiving been ſuch as God has expected from us? Inſtead of praiſing God in a moſt ſolemn and ſerious Manner, what has the Cry been on thoſe Days? *Come, let us go to* Paul's, *and ſee the Show!* The Companies in their Liveries, innumerable Spectators from City and Country, as if the Days were appointed on Purpoſe to keep the People from going to Church.

What ſtrange Notions concerning the Judgments and Mercies of God, have we had deliver'd even from the Pulpits? In one Place, we were told, that the dreadful Hurricane and Tempeſt was a Judgment inflicted by God Almighty, for the Peoples Neglect in beautifying and adorning of Churches. In another Place, the Pulpiteer told us, That all our ſignal Victories were occaſion'd by her Majeſty's Bounty to the Inferior Clergy. Now, when our Judgments and Mercies are attributed to ſuch wrong Cauſes, 'tis no Wonder if our Faſtings and Thankſgivings are ſo irregularly perform'd.

But the main Part of the Text, is, *In Adverſity, conſider.* We have had our rejoycing Time, our inſulting and ſinning Time, and now is come our thinking Time. Adverſity is a Time for Thought and Conſideration; for Retroſpection and Foreſight. Adverſity is a Siſter of Madam *Neceſſity*; ſhe calls very loud upon us to ſubmit to the great Law of *Conſideration*, and if we don't *hear* and *ſee*, we are both *deaf* and *blind* to our own *Intereſt*. But what ſhall we conſider, in this our Day of Adverſity?

1. Let us conſider by Way of Retroſpection, what we have done that has caus'd God thus to leave us, to wither our Lawrels, to blaſt our Enterprizes, and render our Deſigns abortive, when we were full of Hopes, magnifying our Strength, and leſſening that of the Enemy. Why, in a Word, 'tis SIN is the Cauſe of publick and private Calamities, of National and Domeſtick Evils; 'tis what has ruin'd and deſtroy'd one World already; and 'tis what now makes this World ſtagger and totter beneath its Weight.

There is no greater Sin in the World; none

more heinous in the Sight of God, or fruitful in Judgments, than *pretended Sanctity*, than taking Religion for a Cloak of Iniquity; and in the Name of God, doing the Devil's Work.

And pray, Gentlemen, conſider; how much of this have we had in this Reign? How much has it been practis'd to the Diſhonour of God, and in Defiance of the Queen's Orders, and ſolemn Declarations?

Our good Queen, upon her Acceſſion to the Throne, declar'd to her People her reſolute Intentions to diſtinguiſh Perſons of Vertue, by preferring them to Places of Profit and Truſt: But how have her Miniſters and great Officers, comply'd with her Majeſty's pious Intentions and Orders? Who are thoſe vertuous Men, that they have thus diſtinguiſh'd? Where are they? Among the many Inſtances, let that of *Dilks* be mention'd, to ſhow their Compliance with the Queen's Orders; and how much the Civil Magiſtrate is diſcourag'd in putting the Laws of the Land and of God in Execution, and prophane Curſers and Swearers are encourag'd. For theſe Things Heaven often lays a Nation under an Interdict; 'tis ſerving God and *Mammon*; 'tis carrying Fire to the Altar of God in one Hand, and Incenſe to the Devil's Temple in the other.

What has been done for God and Religion, is evident, and what has been done for the Devil too, is as evident. A Chappel has been lately erected, I mean the new Play-houſe, for the Devil's Service. And when the Mouths of all good Men were open'd; when the Pulpits thunder'd againſt thoſe Seminaries of Vice; when the Servants at the Devil's Altar, the Players, were convicted in our Courts of Juſtice, and puniſh'd by the Judges for their impious and blaſphemous Expreſſions on the Stage; when theſe Things reach'd the Royal Ear, her Majeſty made her Order, and gave Commiſſion for the Reformation of the Stage; but how has that been comply'd with? Why, (as if the good Queen is to be baulk'd in every her pious Intention) the Stage is more impious than ever; and more blaſphemous Expreſſions, affronting Heaven, are utter'd upon it, than before.

When her Majeſty came firſt to the Crown, ſhe iſſu'd her Royal Order againſt buying and ſelling of Offices: How that Order has been comply'd with, and is, you may hear at the Coffee-houſes about *Whitehall* every Day in the Week, where the Prices of Commiſſions are as publickly talk'd of, as the Prices of Commodities and Merchandize at the Coffee-houſes about the *Royal Exchange*. And were there no other Proof, the many Officers about Town, who have behav'd themſelves well in the Service, and who have not been taken into any of the new Levies, is ſufficient. Offices are the Due and Right of ſuch as have ſerv'd their Country faithfully.

It is a Thing to be look'd into, and worthy the Examination of ſuch as have a Power of Enquiry, how many Officers, who ought to have been at their Poſts at the Battel of *Almanza*, were then in *London*, and other Places of the Kingdom; what ever *fine Cures* may be allow'd in the Church, there ought to be none in the Army or Navy.

I ſhould now come to the ſecond general Head, *viz.* our Conſideration in reſpect of Foreſight, in relation to what is to be done in order to the retrieving of what is paſt; but I ſee the Mails in my *Country-man*'s Hand, and ſo will wave that Point, 'till another Opportunity.

Country-m. Maſter, there is not one Word of Comfort in 'em.

Obſ. What is there diſcouraging in 'em? We muſt take the Good with the Bad.

Country-m. We muſt ſo; but I had rather good, than bad.

Obſ. So had all honeſt Men; but Good and Bad is not left at our Election.

Country-m. The Account from *Spain* looks yet more cloudy; the Duke of *Anjou*'s Forces are marching for *Catalonia*.

Obſ. Very well, *Roger*; and who knows but there the Tables may be turn'd upon 'em. We find by Experience the Succeſs of War does not remain long of one Side. The Earl of *Gallway* has 4000 Horſe, beſides the Remainder of his Foot not cut off at *Almanza*: He has the Horſe and Dragoons, beſides the Infantry that attended King *Charles* to *Catalonia*: He has the *Miquelets* and the *Catalan* Militia, that are the beſt diſciplin'd of any, except the regular Troops: Who knows what theſe may do, if they come to join? There may be another Squeak for *Spain*.

Country-m. Pray God ſend it be a ſucceſsful Squeak, and then your *Country-man* will roar, ſing *Old Roſe* in the Parlour, and burn the Bellows.

But, Maſter, what is your King of *Sweden* going to do in *Bohemia*, whither, the News by the laſt Mails ſays, he will ſuddenly march?

Obſ. The good Hand of Providence go with him, and grant him the ſame Succeſs, where ever he goes, as hitherto he has met with. May he become yet more glorious, in advancing the Proteſtant Intereſt. May he be the common Protector of injur'd People: An Aſſiſtant to all that wage War in Defence of their holy Religion, and their civil Rights. May his Throne be eſtabliſh'd at Home, and his Armies crown'd with Victory Abroad. May he not only equal, but out-do the Great *Guſtavus Adolphus*, or any of his Royal Anceſtors. And as he is the Wonder of this preſent Age, ſo may his Name flouriſh to ſucceeding Generations.

What he is about to do, I am glad I know not: 'Tis not for a private Perſon to gueſs at the Deſigns of a Prince, when publick Miniſters in vain attempt to pry into his Councils. Time only can ſhow us his Intention, by his Actions. Happy Prince indeed! that has ſuch able Miniſters, ſuch faithful Generals, and ſuch bold victorious Troops; and happy are the People that have ſo great, ſo good, and brave a Prince, who fears none but God, and depends not on his own Strength and the Goodneſs of his Troops, but on Divine Aſſiſtance, and the Juſtice of his Cauſe, for Succeſs.

I have ever expected great Things from this Great Prince, and I believe the Time of their Accompliſhment is near at hand, which I pray God haſten, for the Honour of his Name, and for the common Good of the Diſtreſs'd in the Earth.

Country-m. With me, let all the People ſay, *Amen.*

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